

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SAIGON 07319 050430Z

20

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSC-07 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 OMB-01 SAJ-01 DRC-01 IO-14

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5413

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 7319

FOLLOWING FROM BIEN HOA SENT IMMEDIATE SAIGON INFO DAO SAIGON DTD JUNE

4

REPEATED

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BIEN HOA 298

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, VS

SUBJ: GVN FORCES TAKE AN DIEN HAMLET IN BINH DUONG FIGHTING

REF: BIEN HOA 295

1. DEPUTY MR 3 COMMANDER MG HIEU TELEPHONED AT 1530 HOURS TO SAY THAT GVN FORCES HAD TAKEN AN DIEN HAMLET IN HEAVY FIGHTING DURING WHICH ARVN'S 52ND AND 48TH REGIMENTS HAD DESTROYED FOUR TANKS WITH INFANTRY WEAPONS. HIEU HAD JUST RETURNED FROM BEN CAT.

2. IN CONVERSATION WHICH FOLLOWED, HIEU SAID THAT IN EARLY MORNING HOURS OF JUNE 4, NVA/VC FORCES INCLUDING TANKS, HAD LAUNCHED A COUNTER-ATTACK AGAINST GVN FORCES AROUND AN DIEN. THE GVN COMMANDER OF THE OPERATION, BG DAO OF ARVN 18TH DIVISION, HAD THEN ALSO LAUNCHED A COUNTERATTACK AND AFTER HEAVY FIGHTING HIS TROOPS HAD
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 SAIGON 07319 050430Z

SECURED AN DIEN BY MID-DAY. WHEN COMMUNIST TANKS JOINED THE ATTACK,

ONE WAS KNOCKED OUT BY THE 48TH REGIMENT, TWO BY THE 52ND, AND ONE, DAMAGED BY UNIDENTIFIED FIRE, WAS LAST SEEN MOVING AWAY FROM AN DIEN TOWARD COMMUNIST LINES BURNING BADLY. HIEU SAID HE THOUGHT TWO OF THE TANKS WERE T-54'S AND TWO WERE PT 76'S. ONE OF THE T-54'S APPARENTLY NOSED INTO A DITCH WITH ONLY LIGHT DAMAGE AND IS IN NEAR PERFECT CONDITION. (NOTE: HIEU SAID GVN FORCES WILL SEEK TO EXTRACT THIS TANK AS PROMPTLY AS POSSIBLE AND PLACE IT ON DISPLAY PROMINENTLY IN SAIGON.)

3. ENGINEERS ARE ALREADY AT WORK REPAIRING THE PERMANENT BRIDGE OVER THE THI TINH RIVER WEST OF BEN CAT. HIEU THOUGHT THE 318TH ARMORED TASK FORCE MIGHT BE ABLE TO MOVE WESTWARD FROM BEN CAT DURING THE AFTERNOON OF JUNE 4 TO JOIN THE 52ND AND 48TH REGIMENTS IN A PUSH WESTWARD DOWN ROUTE 7 TOWARD RACH BAP. THE 52ND REGIMENT WAS UNDER ORDERS TO EXPAND THE PERIMETER AROUND AN DIEN ON THE WEST SIDE ON THE AFTERNOON OF JUNE 4 TO PREPARE FOR THE ARRIVAL OF THE 318TH.

4. GENERAL DAO BELIEVES THAT THE AREA NORTHEAST OF BEN CAT THUS FAR HELD BY THE 7TH RANGERS IS SECURE AFTER GVN CAPTURE OF AN DIEN. HIEU THOUGHT THAT DAO WOULD, THEREFORE, MOVE THE 7TH RANGERS TO SOUTHERN BEN CAT DISTRICT WEST OF THE ONG CO BRIDGE ON ROUTE 14 TO RELIEVE THE 43RD REGIMENT WHICH COULD THEN JOIN ITS SISTERS THE 48TH AND 52ND REGIMENTS OF THE 18TH DIVISION IN THE FIGHTING WESTWARD ALONG ROUTE 7. HIEU WAS HOPEFUL THAT DESPITE INDICATIONS THAT THE 271ST NVA REGIMENT HAS NOW COME INTO THE AREA NORTH OF ROUTE 7 TO REINFORCE THE 272ND AND 95-C NVA REGIMENTS, GVN FORCES WOULD REACH RACH BAP AND BRING THIS OPERATION IN BEN CAT TO A CLOSE WITHIN A WEEK.

5. HIEU WAS VERY GENEROUS IN HIS PRAISE OF BG DAO AND THE 18TH DIVISION WHICH HAD MOVED OUT OF ITS ASSIGNED AREA OF OPERATIONS AND AGAIN PULLED OFF A SUCCESSFUL OPERATION AGAINST THE ENEMY.

6. GVN CASUALTIES IN JUNE 4 FIGHTING WERE RELATIVELY LIGHT ACCORDING TO HIEU. HE THOUGHT THAT NVA/VC CASUALTIES IN THE 95-C REGIMENT AT AN DIEN HAD BEEN VERY HEAVY.

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PAGE 03 SAIGON 07319 050430Z

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